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latter portion of *The Industrial State* characterizes *The Modern Commonwealth* throughout. The political scientist and the economist discourse upon governmental and economic questions, but nowhere is found a straightforward story of the development of Illinois. Much of this material is interesting, all of it is replete with valuable information carefully gathered and set forth, but it is not history. True it is, as pointed out by Professor Alvord in the preface to the first volume, that the events of the past twenty or thirty years have not had time to settle, that it is much more difficult to tell the story of these years than that of an earlier period where time has sifted the relevant from the irrelevant; nevertheless it is possible to trace in main outlines even so recent a tale. Consequently it is with regret that one notes that no attempt was made to carry to the end an historical narrative so lucidly and interestingly traced from the days of discovery to 1893.

Despite, however, the disappointment the reader feels in the last volume and a half, the impression of the work as a whole is that Illinois has set the pace. The sister commonwealths have before them an example of what, with like use of resources, a similar will, and years of work such as brought forth the *Centennial History of Illinois*, eventually may and should be done in forty-seven other states.

LESTER BURRELL SHIPPEE

Guide to the County Archives of California. By OWEN C. COY,
PH. D., director and archivist. (Sacramento, California
Historical Survey Commission, 1919. ix, 622 p. Maps.)

If imitation is the highest praise, then Illinois has cause to feel flattered that another state has followed so soon her example in making and publishing a guide to its archives. In 1915 appeared Theodore C. Pease's *County Archives of the State of Illinois*, a pioneer of its kind. (See review, *ante*, 1:220.) This publication of the California Historical Survey Commission, issued four years later, clearly reveals the influence of the Illinois volume both in scope and in method.

In the main, the two works are similar. Both divide the material into three parts: (1) county archives and records in general,

with methods of care and use that have proved most satisfactory; (2) a classification of the duties of the chief county officers and the archives in their keeping; (3) a guide to the archives of every county, with notes of their location and condition. It must not be supposed, however, that the threefold division is indicated in these volumes. Indeed, one criticism that might be made of Mr. Coy's book is that the caption for part one is "The Care and Use of County Archives," whereas investigation reveals that much the larger portion has to do with the classification of California county documents according to the officer in whose charge they are kept. On minor points there are several differences between the two works. Mr. Pease takes up, as records of the clerk of the circuit court, the county clerk, and the recorder, the same kinds of documents which Mr. Coy considers under the classification of the clerk, the recorder, and fiscal officials, county officials and their duties differing slightly in the two states. The most noticeable difference is the addition of school records in Mr. Coy's book. Again, Mr. Coy has improved upon his model by placing a map of the county before the guide to every set of county records. These maps give the present and former county seats, present and former county boundaries, and a legend which refers to the statute or politic code occasioning every change in the map. By way of further comparison of these two works, which, it is hoped, are merely the predecessors of similar publications in every state, it may be said that the more recent is somewhat the more readable book, despite its finer print. This statement applies more specifically to those parts of the work in which the use and care of archives and the classification of documents are considered. The style is simpler than Mr. Pease's, and subheadings in bold face type enable one to tell the content of a section at a glance. Each book is, happily, supplied with an index.

The fact which is borne in upon the reader of both volumes, and the point which the author of each seeks above all else to drive home, is the crying need for more attention to county archives in the United States. The field agents in both states found appalling conditions. At some county seats there are not even vaults, not to mention fireproof buildings, for the preservation of records. Almost worse, however, than the lack of proper

precautions against fire is the negligence which consigns documents to garrets and basements, there to be eaten by mice or to mildew, as the case may be, or at the least to become covered with dust and to decay beyond the reach of those who would find in them precious records.

Of what value these county records are to the public in general, to the lawyer, and to the investigator of the social, political, and economic history of the state may be found well set forth in the preface and first part of Mr. Coy's book. Here only a few instances may be given. Stored away in local courthouses in California were found the records which give the best history of the Spanish and Mexican régime in that region, since the great bulk of the Spanish manuscript documents turned over to the United States upon the transfer of sovereignty from Mexico were burned in the San Francisco fire of 1906. On these records are based innumerable land titles in California. Similarly, the "Record of Official Acts of Thomas O. Larkin," in the archives of Monterey County, are of the utmost importance to students of international law, of American history, and of the relations between Great Britain and the United States.

With these conditions and facts in mind, one cannot refrain from inquiring what is being done along these lines in Minnesota. The answer indicates that the state, through its historical society, is alive to the situation, but that lack of funds precludes, for the present at least, the completion of the work begun over five years ago. In the issue of the *MINNESOTA HISTORY BULLETIN* for May, 1917, is a paper by Mr. Franklin F. Holbrook, field agent for the society, entitled "Some Possibilities of Historical Field Work." In this paper Mr. Holbrook tells of his work in five county seats, conducting the same kind of investigation which Mr. Pease and Mr. Coy have reported with such success. It is to be hoped that a liberal appropriation for research and publication, similar to those made in Illinois and California, will enable Minnesota in the near future to stand forth as the third state in the Union to recognize the farsighted policy of caring for and publishing a guide to its county archives.

GRACE LEE NUTE